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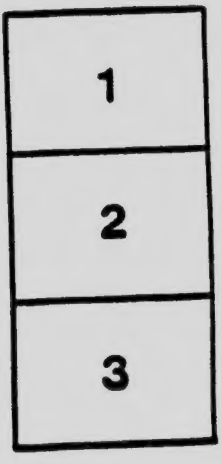

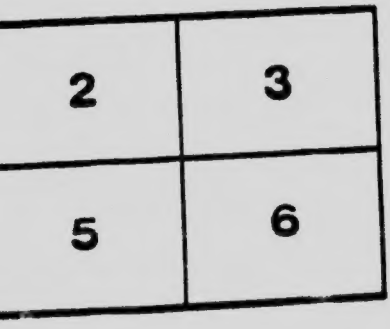

1917
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NEW ONTARIO

Plan of Co-Operation (or Union)

Historical Sketch

Co-operation has been carried on in New Ontario for a number of years, at first very timidly, and on a six-months' basis only. Indeed in those early days all negotiations took the form of "Conversations" rather than "Signed Agreements." Of the latter, the Matheson case, early in 1909, was among the first. In the older centres the problem was more difficult, and 1913 is the date of our first signed agreement. In 1914-15 we were working on a more permanent basis, but waiting for Church Legislation which would enable us to advance all along the line.

In January 1917 representatives of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches met in the city of Toronto, and pending the Union of these denominations, agreed on a "Suggested Plan for Local Union Churches," and revised "Agreement for Co-operation." In February 1917, we, the undersigned, called a conference in the Town of North Bay, of Chairmen of Districts, Convenors and Clerks of Presbyteries, covering the Districts of Bracebridge, Parry Sound, North Bay, New Liskeard, Cochrane, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, corresponding in the main with the territory included in the Presbyteries of Barrie, North Bay, Temiskaming, Sudbury and Algoma. The object of this gathering was to see how far these Church

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leaders would go along co-operative lines in order that New Ontario might play its part in solving National and World Problems, problems greatly intensified by the call of the World-War, to which hundreds of our Students and Missionaries responded. The Conference unanimously decided to suggest to the Presbyteries and Districts that they make an honest and unselfish attempt to eliminate all overlapping in their respective territories.

The Plan.

The Plan of Co-operation arranged, is in harmony with the "Agreement for Co-operation" authorised and endorsed by the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Canada. The Presbyteries and Districts interested accepted the challenge and unanimously endorsed the recommendation of their co-operating Committees.

The Mode of Procedure.

1. (a) Each District and Presbytery appoints a small Committee to represent it in the negotiations. These, with the Superintendents of Missions, constitute the local Co-operating Committee.

(b) At a Co-operating Committee Meeting a careful survey of the territory is made, and the Preaching places (whether Methodist or Presbyterian) are grouped into workable "Pastoral Charges," "Fields," or circuits.

(c) These groups are then assigned to the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, care being taken to deal fairly with each denomination and thus maintain the relative strength in the territory under review.

(d) Only those propositions that have been unanimously adopted by the Co-operating Committee are sent forward to the Presbytery and District Meetings.

2. The propositions having been endorsed by the Church Courts interested, are then presented to the different Congregations for their approval.

(a) In presenting it to the people the Methodist and Presbyterian representatives visit the same Community at the same time, each holding a meeting with his own Church folk and carefully and fairly outlining the plan and the reason why they are asked to sacrifice some sweet associations.

(b) The approval of the people having been procured each congregation nominates representatives for the Session and Committee of Stewards. The size of the Session is determined by the number of Presbyterian Elders, all of whom are nominated to represent the Presbyterian side, and an equal number of Methodists appointed to represent their wing of the Co-operating Congregation.

(c) A joint meeting is immediately held (always in the Church building of the Congregation giving up its minister) where it is moved by a member of this congregaton seconded by a member of the other "That whereas we, the Methodist and Presbyterian Congregations of.....having agreed to the suggestions of the Co-operative Committee as presented by the representatives of our respective Churches, therefore be it resolved (1) that we do not constitute ourselves the charter members of the United Congregation of.....(2) that we proceed to organise in accordance with the policy outlined in the accepted basis of Union of the proposed "United Church of Canada' save only that for the present, and until the consummation of the larger Union, this Congregation shall be in complete connectional relationship with the..... Church in Canada."

(d) The Elders, Stewards, &c., having been duly elected by the United congregation the form of organisation is adopted with the understanding that in this connection "Complete Connectional Relationship" means that when a congregation is assigned to the care of either denomination, it must (whether self-supporting or not) have as its pastor, a minister of, and procure him according to the plan of "Settlement of Ministers" practised by the Communion to which it has been assigned.

(e) That public or divine worship on the Sabbath Day must be conducted in the Church Building of the Congregation giving up its minister, unless they for local reasons wish it otherwise.

Form of Organisation.

The local organisation of all Congregations is the same, no matter whether assigned to the care of Methodists or Presbyterians, and is in harmony with that prescribed for the local church in the accepted basis of the proposed United Church of Canada, that is to say: First. The liberty of the Pastoral Charge shall be recognised to the fullest extent compatible with

(a) The oversight of the Spiritual Interests of the charge by the minister and a body of men especially chosen and set apart or ordained for the work who shall jointly constitute the Session.

(b) The efficient co-operation of the representatives of the various departments of the work of the charge by means of a meeting to be held at least quarterly.

(c) The hearty co-operation of the various pastoral charges in the general work of the Church.

(d) The exercise by the higher governing bodies, or courts, of their powers and function.

Second. Such pastoral charge shall have complete connectional relationship with that denomination to which it has been assigned, and shall in addition to supporting the local church, support the connectional and Missionary interests of the Communion with which it is identified.

Third (a) When a Field has been assigned the roll of membership shall be composed of all the members of the Uniting churches within the charge of circuit.

(b) The members shall be considered Methodist and Presbyterian (or any other) members of the Local United Church of .....

(c) Members may unite with, or get their certificates of disjunction from the United Church of.....as Methodist or Presbyterian members.

(d) In cases of discipline all appeals may be made directly to the Church Court of which the individual was a member.

Fourth. The members of the Church entitled to all church privileges are those who, on profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to Him, have been received into full membership. These shall have the right to vote at all meetings, and with their consent, adherents who contribute regularly to the support of the Church, may vote on temporal matters.

Fifth. In organising the United Church, proportionate representation should be given to each congregation entering the Union in all departments of the work.

Sixth. Each Pastoral Charge is entitled to send a delegate to the meetings of both the District and Presbytery.

Seventh. There shall be a Session and a Committee of Stewards. These shall constitute

(jointly) the official Board to which also may be added representatives from the various departments of the Church's work. The Pastor is Ex-officio chairman of the Session and Official Board.

Duties of the Session.

1. The admission of persons into full membership with the Church and the granting of certificates of removal.

2. The power to administer discipline.

3. The order and arrangement of Public Worship and the use of the Church Building.

4. To administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

5. To recommend candidates for the Ministry.

6. The spiritual oversight of the entire work of the Congregation.

Duties of the Stewards.

1. To secure contributions for the salary and running expenses of the local congregation.

2. To disperse same for these purposes.

Duties of the Official Board.

1. To secure contributions for Missionary and other general objects of the Church.

2. To elect representatives to the Presbytery or to the District meetings.

3. To submit to the local congregation a statement of receipts and expenditures for the year.

4. To attend to any matters affecting the charge not definitely assigned to any other body.

Church Property.

1. All title deeds shall remain as they are, but should it be deemed advisable to dis-

pose of property this may be done, but must be through the regular channels of our Church Courts.

2. The moneys received from any such sale shall he held on deposit to the credit of the local congregation until the consummation of Organic Union, provided however, that in special cases, each of which must be considered on its merits, consent may be given to use the money for local purposes at any time.

3. All property is under the control of the Official Board for the use of the local United congregation.

4. This Board shall collect all revenue, rents &c., pay all taxes and insurance, and see that the property is kept in a reasonable state of repair.

5. Unused Church buildings shall not be given for use to other religious bodies or persons without the consent of the Co-operating Committee.

Suggestions.

1. Make as little change as possible from what the congregation has been accustomed to, in the use of hymn books, Sunday-school supplies, &c., even though both may be used.

2. That Pastors occasionally exchange pulpits with their brethren of the Sister denomination, in order that any who wish may have their children baptised by a minister of the Church to which they originally belonged, thus fostering a spirit of good fellowship and Christian Untiy.

Results.

The mobilisation of our forces in New Ontario alone has resulted in the saving of eighty men, 39 Methodists and 41 Presbyterians, together with upwards of fifty thousand dollars annually to the missionary enterprises

of these two denominations. This conservation of Man and Money Power has not only liberated Leaders for other needy centres, but has greatly strengthened the Fighting Force of the Local Communities. In many places, ordained ministers have replaced Students, Catechists or Probationers, thus giving permanency to the things of the Kingdom as well as serving a much larger constituency. Indeed, if increased attendance at divine worship, additions of new members, renewed interest in the Sunday-school, Young People's Organisations, and Women's Missionary Society, together with ever increasing contributions, are indications of a deepening spiritual life, then assuredly, the Church is playing a more vital part than ever before in the lives of individuals and communities. Moreover, what shall we say of the "Inter-Church National Campaign" where every Union congregation (that canvassed) went over the top, some twice and some three times.

Assuredly our people are proud to have had a part in the "Big Drive" that has eliminated all overlapping in Aid-receiving Congregations throughout this great Northland, fully recognising that

"Then shall His perfect will be done
When Christians love and live as one."

Yours in the Master's Service,

F. L. BROWN,
Missionary Supt. Methodist Church.

J. D. BYRNES,
District Supt. Presbyterian Church.